

International Talent Support Marks 20th Anniversary in September With Olivier Saillard Exhibit

By [Rahul Kumar](#) — On [Mar 17, 2022](#)

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MILAN — This year marks a milestone anniversary for the International Talent Support contest, also known as ITS, which is turning 20 and finally gearing up to unveil ITS Arcademy, a multipurpose space founder Barbara Franchin had envisioned already pre-pandemic.

The competition's award ceremony will take place in Trieste, Italy, on Sept. 9 and 10.

Returning to the IRL format forwent over the past two years due to the point pandemic, the talent search is opening applications Thursday until May 8. Fashion and design creatives are asked to submit their collections based on the "Ark of Creativity" theme, nodding to the many designers spotlighted by ITS over the years.

ITS prides itself on having supported talents spanning from Demna, currently creative director of Balenciaga; Matthieu Blazy, the freshly installed Bottega Veneta creative director, as well as London darling Richard Quinn and Iceberg's James Long, among others.

"For 20 years, the ark of ITS has been navigating the seas of creativity recovering extraordinary projects from the waters, resisting with all its might the forces of decay," Franchin said. "The body of works is precious because it represents our legacy for the future: pure creative seeds ready to germinate, bringing the magic of this heritage to new generations, through knowledge and inspiration."

This year's winners are expected to be unveiled in July ahead of the award ceremony. They will be rewarded with funds and mentorship programs offered by ITS' longtime partners the OTB Group, Pitti Immagine, Swatch and Lotto, as well as eyewear giant Luxottica, which is joining the roster of sponsors this year for the first time.

The September ceremony will also mark the unveiling of ITS Arcademy, a space built on the extensive archives the talent search has amassed over 20 years and which include 14,000-plus portfolios, more than 1,000 fashion pieces and dozens of accessories and jewels. In addition to the exhibiting spaces, ITS Arcademy will host workshops, educational and training activities involving former finalists, winners and jurors.

The sprawling headquarters covering 7,000 square feet were originally supposed to be unveiled in 2020, before the pandemic scuppered the plans.

Celebrating the milestone, Franchin called on famed French fashion historian Olivier Saillard to curate the seminal exhibition, titled "La Prima Mostra," or "The First Exhibition" in English, based on the talent search's archives.

Saillard touted Franchin's and her team's curatorial approach to holding an archive for two decades, which "will testify to the future the enormous vitality of contemporary creativity in fashion. It is our responsibility to stage it, to present it with respect for the talent of each creator."

He said the exhibit will be centered on "an introspective journey that invites each of us to the precious discovery of each of the authors," marking a different approach for him compared to previous shows he has curated on the established couturiers and creators of the 20th and 21st centuries.

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